



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF INVESTIGATION & SECURITY SERVICES INC.

THE NATIONAL VOICE OF THE PRIVATE INVESTIGATION & SECURITY INDUSTRIES

INVESTIGATIVE VALUE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

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Proposed legislation would prohibit the sale of Social Security number information. As a result, private investigators would lose access to databases that are effective for helping distinguish individuals with similar names. This is particularly important with regard to women (who may assume their husband's name).

How the data are used

Social Security numbers are an integral part of "credit headers", the non-credit portion of a credit report. This information can lead to current and former addresses of individuals being sought when combined with public record information by aggregators. This is a key to many of the functions performed by investigators. Of equal value are dates of birth and driver's license information.

Obtaining Criminal Histories

Investigators do not have access to a central criminal history database, so it is essential to have address information when seeking information about prior convictions. With address data, investigators know which courthouse records to search. This information is important for more than pre-employment purposes. In both civil and criminal trials, attorneys need to know the backgrounds of witnesses and potential witnesses.

Locating Ill Gotten Gains

Address information is valuable in locating stolen assets. Database information led directly to the recovery of hundreds of thousands of dollars stolen by a caregiver and recovered by the NCISS legislative Chairman.

Finding Witnesses

In both civil and criminal trials, justice is served best by all parties getting access to possible witnesses. The address information is used routinely to locate witnesses, particularly when they may be transient. *Database searches led directly to witnesses who recanted testimony and helped free a man wrongly imprisoned for twenty years!*

Legislation restricting the use of Social Security numbers always provides exceptions for law enforcement. This creates an obvious issue of due process because prosecutors, with the full resources of the state will have use of this tool while the accused will not.

Obtaining Delinquent Child Support

In numerous cases, such data have led to recovery of funds from persons not meeting their child support obligations.

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